

# Chapter 1 Newsletter

March 1984

Vol. 1, No. 1

## Selecting Chapter 1 Students (or using a Weighted Scale Correctly)

In many Montana Chapter 1 programs, a weighted scale combining a test score, teacher referral and student performance is used to compile a point total for each eligible student. These totals are then organized in rank order as the prioritized list and the students "greatest in need" are selected for the Chapter 1 program.

Monitoring visits by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) Chapter 1 personnel during this school year have noted inconsistencies in using a weighted scale for the selection of Chapter 1 students. Problem areas include:

### Failure to Establish an Appropriate Cut-off Score

After ranking the point totals on the prioritized list, a reasonable cut-off score (minimum numbers of points a student must compile in order to be selected for the program) should be established. This cut-off score must be high enough to require more than just a teacher referral and limit the number of Chapter 1 students to the caseload approved in the application. Students whose point total does not meet or exceed this cut-off score cannot be selected into the Chapter 1 program without additional documentation (two or more sources of additional test scores, grades or other objective information which clearly qualify the eligible student as a high-priority student for Chapter 1 services).

### Failure to Use Criteria Consistently for all Students

The district must decide what criteria is important to appropriately select Chapter 1 students and establish the weighted scale based on that criteria. All eligible students should be rated according to all areas listed on the weighted scale to insure that each student has an equal opportunity to be selected into the program.

### Inappropriate Use of Teacher Recommendation

Teacher referral should not be the overriding factor in whether a student is placed or not placed in the Chapter 1 program. A teacher referral may be submitted as part of the needs assessment or at any time during the school year. Any teacher who is familiar with the student's performance and can provide specific information relating to instructional needs may make an appropriate referral. If teacher referral is collected as part of the spring needs assessment, it may be used as part of the weighted scale to select the next fall's students.

### Inappropriate Use of the Prioritized List

In some instances, kindergarten and first grade students are being selected based on more limited criteria than is required for selection of a student at grade two or higher. Sometimes high priority students are eliminated from service due to non-pertinent classroom issues such as teacher reluctance to release students or low student-teacher ratio. When a large number of high priority students qualify at a single grade level, some are not selected into the program in order to select an equal number of students at every grade level. To avoid these misuses, one should insure that the prioritized list is followed in rank order for all students based on equivalent criteria across grade levels. Any exceptions to the prioritized list must be documented with objective information.

To use a weighted scale correctly for Chapter 1 student selection, make certain that the following criteria are met:

1. Establish appropriate criteria for the weighted scale and apply the criteria consistently for all eligible Chapter 1 students.
2. Organize the prioritized list in rank order by point totals and establish a minimum cut-off score.
3. Follow the prioritized list in order for the selection of students. Document any exceptions to the prioritized list with objective data.
4. Insure that no students are placed on teacher referral alone.

## The Chapter 1 Newsletter

If you find this newsletter useful, please let the OPI Chapter 1 staff know. We will try to use your constructive comments for future editions. Your suggestions for a name for the newsletter are also requested!

## Chapter 1 Spring Workshops

The OPI will hold its spring workshops during the week of April 2-6, 1984, at two sites in the state. Members of the OPI Chapter 1 staff and representatives from the Northwest Regional Educational Lab in Portland, Oregon, will present sessions on Chapter 1 evaluation, needs assessment and program planning. Changes in Chapter 1 as a result of the technical amendments recently passed by Congress, the federal non-binding guidelines and a new Montana Chapter 1 handbook will also be discussed. Chapter 1 evaluation forms for the 1983-84 school year, amendment application forms for the 1984-85 school year and allocation information for the 1984-85 school year will be given out at these spring workshops.

Two persons from each Chapter 1 project, an administrator and a teacher or aide, are invited to attend the workshop most convenient to the district. Each workshop will run from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on the dates listed.

Monday, April 2, 1984 - Billings - Ramada Inn

Wednesday, April 4, 1984 - Fairmont Hot Springs

Those districts lacking sufficient inservice funds to attend may request a budget revision, amendment or reallocated funds from the OPI in order to attend the workshop.

We'll look forward to seeing you at the spring workshops!

## Washington News

For the first time in many years, Congress has passed an appropriations bill (instead of a Continuing Resolution) and the President has signed it into law. According to the latest figures obtained by the OPI, Montana is to receive approximately a ten percent increase in funds allocated to the state. This means Montana could receive an additional \$850,000 in the 1984-85 ECIA Chapter 1 allocation. How the funds will flow down to the county and school district level will depend upon the 1980 Census and individual school districts' low-income count from that data. Ten countable low-income children is the magic number again.

ECIA Chapter 1 Technical Amendments have been passed and these amendments will have a definite effect on many school districts in Montana. Our spring workshops will be an excellent place for the OPI to discuss the changes with school districts. These amendments modify Chapter 1 by rescinding some requirements and reinstating or changing some options which will provide more flexibility to local school districts. Appropriate changes in the state handbook, federal non-regulatory guidance and the statute (Public Law 97-35) will be made and distributed to each school district.

## Questions and Answers

At our school, we often enroll new students or transfer students that were not present when we did our spring needs assessment. How do we properly qualify these students for Chapter 1?

The preferred way to qualify new or transfer students for Chapter 1 would be to gather the appropriate information for the process used to select other Chapter 1 students (e.g., the weighted scale). The test score can come from the student's previous school or as a result of retesting after enrollment at your school. Teacher referral would come from the student's classroom teacher after an appropriate transition period to the new school (approximately two-four weeks). Student performance information could be obtained from permanent records transferred by the previous school or placement/performance information obtained after the enrollment and transition period.

If it is not possible to gather the appropriate information for the new/transfer student on the regular selection method, placement by documentation can be considered. Documentation would require a minimum of two sources of objective information relative to the student's performance. These sources could include diagnostic test data, current grades and below grade level basic placement. Subjective information, such as teacher referral, is not adequate as a documentation source. The documentation information should clearly establish that the student is a high-priority student when compared to students selected for Chapter 1 according to the prioritized list. Teacher referral should precede documentation.





Sometimes a student ranks high on the prioritized list yet does not appear to need Chapter 1 services. What documentation is necessary for non-placement?

Documentation for non-placement of a student who appears to need Chapter 1 services according to the prioritized list must clearly establish that the student does not need help due to adequate classroom performance. Subjective information, such as teacher opinion and general statements, like "doing okay in the classroom," are not adequate. Specific objective information, such as diagnostic test scores, report card grades of "C" or better, current classroom grades or achievement test scores indicating average or better performance, would be acceptable. Two or more sources of such information should be provided.

Please clarify when a special education student may be served in the Chapter 1 program.

The Special Education Child Study Team must determine the specific learning disability of the student according to state and federal regulations. These specific areas are: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation and mathematics reasoning. Special education is responsible for addressing the learning disability and affected content areas. The Child Study Team may refer students to Chapter 1, but may not place students into a Chapter 1 program. Chapter 1 may serve the student in content areas not related to the learning disability if the student qualifies according to Chapter 1 selection criteria. Chapter 1 and special education services may not be split across related subject areas. For example, if the student is determined to have a learning disability in reading comprehension, the student would not be placed in special education for reading comprehension and also receive Chapter 1 services in vocabulary and phonics.

### Pac-Man Math Power

Grade Level: 1-5

Materials needed: Bulletin board;  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $9\frac{1}{2}$ " strips of paper with a list of math facts to be learned listed vertically in random order; a paper strip ( $2\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $9\frac{1}{2}$ ") with student's name written on top; Pac-Man stickers.

Objective: The student will learn math facts: addition, subtraction, multiplication or division.

In order to receive a Pac-Man sticker for his paper strip, the student must say the answers to all the math facts within as many seconds as the student and teacher decide on (about 20 to 30 seconds). This may be a diagnostic tool as well, in that if the student doesn't know particular facts, he will practice and learn these facts before he goes to the next set of facts. Each time the student masters a set of facts, he receives a sticker which is placed on his paper strip. His reward for knowing all the facts in a given operation is to take his strip of stickers home.

Variations: Instead of using Pac-Man stickers, use holiday stickers or one small token, like a small plastic car, that can be pinned on the bulletin board and moved as the student advances to the higher numbers. In this case, place the paper strips horizontally.

Diane O'Hara  
East Side School  
Billings, Montana

### Tips on Writing Techniques

A technique to help develop a clear, concise, four-sentence paragraph can be best described as the 2-1-4 method of writing. A topic sentence containing two major ideas is introduced, i.e., "My two favorite holidays are Thanksgiving and Christmas." Each student is asked to write one supporting sentence for each of the main ideas. A concluding sentence is then added in summary of the other three--thus the 2 (two main ideas in the topic sentence) 1 (one supporting sentence for each idea) and 4 (a concluding fourth sentence). Such a paragraph might read:

My two favorite holidays are Thanksgiving and Christmas. On Thanksgiving I enjoy going to Grandma's house for a huge dinner of turkey, dressing, pumpkin pie and other goodies. Christmas brings lots of presents as well as the joy of giving gifts to my family. No wonder I look forward to these two holidays!

Students are thus encouraged to restrict their paragraph development to two major thoughts and choose the most important details in support of the topic sentence.

Evelyn Jennings  
7th & 8th Grade Chapter 1  
Riverside Junior High  
Billings, Montana

## Elementary Reading Chapter 1 Reading Incentives

Since many children in the Chapter 1 program are reluctant readers, I have devised two activities to encourage recreational reading. The first one involves a home reading program.

In this program, the children are asked to be involved with the reading process 10 minutes a night (this could be listening to a story being read to them, reading a menu if having dinner out, etc.).

Special cards or slips of paper are sent home each evening. We follow the sports seasons--starting with football shaped cards, followed by basketball, track, etc. The cards or incentives could be anything--flowers, book characters or whatever interests the students. The parent will sign the special card when the reading has been done and send it back to school. The cards are kept in the child's chart pocket until the end of the designated season.

At the end of the season, cards are counted for those students who participated. A speaker (related to the sport, etc.) is invited to class to talk to students about the importance of reading in his/her job and to hand out certificates and prizes. Anyone who turns in a card earns a certificate. A child who turns in 10 or more cards earns a prize.

The second project relates to reading books. Each time a child reads an entire book (this can be at home or school) he/she writes down the book title and author and turns it in to the Chapter 1 room. The child then gets a paper hot-air balloon to put up on the wall (one balloon per book read). At the end of the year, the balloons are counted and the child who read the most books (in each grade level) wins a ride in a hot-air balloon. KXXL radio station has graciously offered this ride free as their part in encouraging children to read.

During the year, there are comprehension questions, short book reports and other activities for the children to do to insure that they have, in fact, read these books.

Both projects are very well received by the children and parents are eager to participate with their children.

Pam Bredberg  
Chapter 1 Teacher  
Irving Elem.  
Bozeman, Montana

### We Need Your Opinions!

The Chapter 1 staff at the OPI is making plans for the 1984-85 school year and we need your help in doing our "Needs Assessment." Enclosed with this newsletter is a form which asks your preferences for fall workshops and OPI Chapter 1 services for next year. This type of needs assessment has been very helpful to us in workshop planning during the past two years. Your time and effort in completing this form will be appreciated and, hopefully, will result in fall workshops which meet your needs as an instructor or administrator in a Chapter 1 district program.

The "Sharing Section" of the Needs Assessment form will focus on computer software programs which Chapter 1 instructors are finding useful, motivational and/or effective for Chapter 1 students. If you have some software favorites, please share them. A list of the titles shared will be compiled and available at the fall workshops.

There is also a questionnaire about National Diffusion Network training sessions. These are exemplary programs whose effectiveness has been demonstrated with students. If you would like the OPI to schedule a training session with one or more of these programs, indicate your interest on the enclosed survey.

Please return the completed forms to the OPI by April 2, 1984. Thank you for your help.

### Attendance Motivator

At the high school level, regular attendance is a problem. Students with low skills levels traditionally do not enjoy attending school. Families often do not stress the importance of an education: they keep kids home to babysit, to help with household chores; they travel or they leave the kids unattended for extended periods of time. By the high school years, the pattern of missing school is set; attending school is often more painful than staying home.

Variable credit is a helpful solution to the problem. In a variable credit system, credits are awarded on the basis of attendance and completed assignments. When the students realize attendance affects credits for this class, they often will choose to go to their other classes as well. We know if the students are in school, there is a greater chance for learning to occur than if they are not in school.

Rita Blouke  
Chapter 1 Reading  
Helena High School  
Helena, Montana

